

Blue Jays' wrestling season to begin Saturday at Hoxie

By DICK BOYD

Coach Bill Johnson's Norton Community High School varsity wrestling team will open the 2004-'05 season on Saturday when they compete in the annual Hoxie Invitational Wrestling Tournament.

This early season tournament always proves to be one of the toughest invitationals in North-west Kansas.

Also competing are Dodge City, Oakley, Oberlin, Plainville and Trego.

The tournament will begin at 8:30 a.m. at Hoxie High School. Trophies will be awarded to the top two teams and medals to the first through fourth place wrestlers in each weight class.

Admission will be \$6 for adults and \$5 for students (K-12) for all day or \$4 for adults and \$3 for students (K-12) for the third and fourth place and championship matches.

The tournament will run continuously with minimum breaks of 15-20 minutes between sessions.

Junior varsity to Alma

The Norton junior varsity wrestlers will also compete in a tournament Saturday in Alma, Neb.

Other teams competing will be varsity teams from Alma, S.E.M., Loomis, Overton, Pleasanton, Kearney Catholic, Eustis-Farnam, Wilcox-Hildreth and Wauneta-Palisade.

Competition will begin at 10 a.m. with the second session set for noon and the third session for 2:30 p.m. Admission will be \$5, all day; \$4 final session, adults; \$4, all day; \$3, final session, students.

Coach Bill Johnson

Coach Johnson begins his 14th season as head wrestling coach at Norton Community High School. He has 34 team members, including nine lettermen and six returning starters from last season's

Class 3-2-1A state championship team.

Coach Johnson's Blue Jay wrestling teams have built a championship tradition but, despite a number of seconds, thirds, fourths and fifths, had not won the big prize until last season when they defeated Hoxie for the title.

Norton placed second in the state tournament in 1996-'97 and 1997-'98 and third in 1995-'96. After placing 13th in 1998-'99, the Blue Jay grapplers tied for fourth in 1999-'00 and placed third in 2000-'01.

Norton moved up to Class 4A the next year and placed fifth in the state tournament after winning the regional.

In 2002-'03, Norton compiled a perfect 12-0 dual record and went undefeated in the Mid-Continent League to win the championship. Norton won the regional but placed second to Hoxie at state.

Last season, the Blue Jays put together another perfect dual record when they went 16-0 to repeat as Mid-Continent League champions. Norton placed second to defending state champion Hoxie in the regional tournament but dethroned the Indians in the state tournament.

Six returning state tournament placers will lead the way for this season's Blue Jay wrestling team. The small senior class includes a very large and talented defending state heavyweight champion Michael Sprigg.

"Michael was able to bring the state heavyweight title back to Norton last season and with it came the team title," said Coach Johnson.

Sprigg is a three-time state heavyweight medalist. He placed fourth in Class 4A his freshman season and second his sophomore season before winning the cham-

pionship as a junior.

Norton's junior class includes three wrestlers who have won state medals. Leading the way is Clay Madden, who was the 112 pound state champion last season and the 103 pound champion his freshman season. Lance Roe returns for his junior season after placing fourth at 135 pounds last season and fifth his freshman season. The third junior state medalist is Luke Pfannenstiel, who placed fifth at 112 pounds his freshman season. Luke had to sit out last season with an injury.

Two sophomores won state medals last season as freshmen. Kent Mann placed fifth at 103 pounds and Nathan Broeckelman was the state runner-up at 119 pounds.

Madden had a 31-1 record last season and Sprigg was 29-4. Roe was 31-7 last season, Mann was 20-9 and Broeckelman was 26-11. Pfannenstiel was 2-2 before his season-ending injury.

Junior Jeremy Harding is the other returning starter from last season. He wrestled at 145 pounds and compiled a 14-16 record.

The other returning lettermen are junior Jon Harding, 125 pounds, 24-4 record and sophomore Logan Keiswetter, 103 pounds, 15-8 record.

Other team members and their tentative weight classes are Corey Look, 160; Paul Juenemann, 189; Blake Hillebrand, 215, seniors; Will Wilhite, 160; Davvid Stanley, 171; Brady Linner, 171; juniors; Jared Bebb, 125; Michael Ward, 135; Jordan Durham, 140; Blake VanEaton, 145; Chris Davis, 145; Shane Stanley, 189; Chris Kaiser, 215, sophomores; Andrew Black, 103; Bryce Engelbert, 112; Travis Ray, 112; Aaron Van DerWege, 119; Aaron Husted, 130; Austin Brown, 125; Todd Bolt, 125; Jeff



Norton junior Clay Madden, a two-time state champion, completes a take-down while wrestling with freshman Todd Bolt during team practice on Monday. Fans are invited to tonight's ranking matches in the junior high gym which begin at 6:30 p.m. Admission is one non-perishable food item for God's Pantry. —Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Norton Wrestling

Saturday, Dec. 4 - Junior varsity at Alma Tournament, 10 a.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 4 - Varsity at Hoxie Invitational, 8:30 a.m.
 Friday, Dec. 10 - JV at S. Valley Oxford, Neb., 3:30 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 11 - Varsity at Clay Center Invitational, 9:30 a.m.
 Friday, Dec. 17 - P-burg/Stockton dual, Phillipsburg, 5 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 18 - Goodland Holiday Classic, 9 a.m.
 Saturday, Jan. 8 - Jake Durham Invitational, Norton, 10 a.m.
 Thursday, Jan. 13 - Smith Center/Trego dual, Norton, 6 p.m.
 Friday/Sat., Jan. 14-15 - Newton Tourn. of Champions, 11 a.m.
 Friday, Jan. 14 - JV at Elm Creek Invitational, 2:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, Jan. 25 - Hays/Kearney, Neb. dual, Hays, 4 p.m.
 Saturday, Jan. 29 - League tournament, WaKeeney, 10 a.m.
 Friday, Feb. 4 - Plainville/Ellis dual, Ellis, 5 p.m.
 Saturday, Feb. 5 - Panther Classic (V&JV), Phillipsburg, 9 a.m.
 Thursday, Feb. 10 - Hill City/Osborne dual, Hill City, 5 p.m.
 Saturday, Feb. 12 - Colby Junior Varsity Tournament, 9 a.m.
 Friday/Sat., Feb. 18-19 - Regional Tournament, TBA, 1 p.m.
 Friday/Saturday, Feb. 25-26 - State Tournament, Fort Hays State University, 9 a.m.

"St. Francis and Oakley should make some noise this year at the state tournament," he said.

Assisting this season with his coaching duties will be assistant coaches Deyton Hager and Doug Ray. Student managers are Kelli Johnson, Claudia Lacy, seniors; Kayla Douglas, Alexi Wolf, juniors; Jessica Sprigg, sophomore.

Coach Johnson is a graduate of Flinthills High School, Rosalia. He graduated from Fort Hays State College with a bachelor of science in health and human performance. His major was physical education.

As a wrestler at Fort Hays, he won the NAIA national championship at 118 pounds in 1987, was

runnerup in 1986 and 1989 and placed fourth in 1988. He was an NAIA Wrestling Academic All-American in 1988 and 1989.

He was chosen the Outstanding Senior Male Athlete at Fort Hays in 1989. He also placed tenth in the wrestling olympic trials at 114.5 pounds in 1988.

Coach Johnson was inducted in the fall of 1999 into the Tiger Sports Hall of Fame at Fort Hays State. He was also inducted into the National Association of Inter-collegiate Athletics Hall of Fame.

He has a 107-34 dual record (73 percent) at Norton and a career record of 113-52.

Northern Valley girls squad returning five letterwinners

The Northern Valley High School girls basketball team will start its season this Friday, when they host Atwood at 4 p.m.

Longtime coach Bill Lowry, whose record is 135-248, said strengths include five returning letterwinners, a 77 percent offense return, and the 16 players on the roster. He said the team's speed has increased, which is another big strength.

As for weaknesses, he said the team lacks size and half of the squad is new.

Returning starters are senior Lindsey Graham, a 5-foot, 11-inch post with an average of 13.3 points per game and 10.2 rebounds per game; senior Lindsey Jessup, a 5-7 point guard with an average of 4.3 points per game, 2.8 rebounds and 2.6 assists; and junior Serena Woodside, a 5-9 post with an average of 6.4 points per game and 5.2 rebounds.

Other starters this season are sophomore Kelli Cole, a 5-6 guard with a 6.8 points per game average, as well as a 2.7 rebound average and 1.0 assist average; sophomore Jena Jessup, a 5-5 guard with

a 3.9 points per game and 1.3 rebounds per game average; and senior Jayme Horacek, a 5-9 guard.

Also on the team are sophomores Andrea Lowry, 5-4; Jessica Holmes, 5-4; and Alysia Shearer, 5-10; and freshmen Stephanie Tubbs, 5-8; Kyleneia Hager, 5-8; Amanda Turman, 5-1; Joni Hilburn, 5-1; Kelsey Kinderknecht,

5-4; Amanda Hopkins, 5-6; and Jessica Largent, 5-8.

Jessica King, Hope Hansen and Jessica Wenzl are the team's managers. Assistant coach is Debbie Field.

Coach Lowry said the toughest contender this year will be Eastern Heights. Logan and Western Plains will also be strong, he said.

Northern Valley Basketball

Friday, Dec. 3 — Atwood, Alma, 4 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 4 — Golden Plains, Rexford, 4 p.m.
 Friday, Dec. 10 — Hill City, there, 5 p.m.
 Tuesday, Dec. 14 — Smith Center, there, 4 p.m.
 Friday, Dec. 17 — Bertrand (Neb.), there, 4 p.m.
 Tuesday, Dec. 21 — Brewster, Alma, 4 p.m.
 Monday, Jan. 3 — Cambridge (Neb.) Tournament., 6 p.m.
 Friday, Jan. 7 — Western Plains*, Ransom, 4:30 p.m.
 Friday, Jan. 14 — Palco*, Alma, 4:30 p.m.
 Saturday, Jan. 15 — Southern Valley (Neb.), Alma, 3 p.m.
 Mon.-Sat., Jan. 17-22 — League Tournament, Phillipsburg, TBA
 Tuesday, Jan. 25 — Osborne, Alma, 4 p.m.
 Friday, Jan. 28 — Logan*, there, 4:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, Feb. 1 — Alma, Alma, 4 p.m.
 Friday, Feb. 4 — Eastern Heights, Agra, 4:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, Feb. 8 — Arapahoe, Neb., Alma, 3:30 p.m.
 Friday, Feb. 18 — Kensington*, there, 4:30 p.m.
 * district games

All-league teams announced

Northern Valley High School and Logan High School had several of their football and volleyball players on the Cheyenne Conference All-League teams.

Football

On the all-league football team were:

Offense — Joey Copper, quarterback, Northern Valley; Jesse Hilburn, running back, Northern Valley; Thomas Ostmeyer, end, Northern Valley; Cole Kinderknecht, lineman, Northern Valley; Lonnie Woods, honorable mention, lineman, Logan.

Defense — Kinderknecht, lineman, Northern Valley; Clarke Nelson, linebacker, Northern Valley; Wesley Riley, honorable mention, linebacker, Logan; Avery Thalheim, linebacker, Northern Valley; Ostmeyer, defensive back,

Northern Valley.

Others on the team were: offense: running backs — Austin Panter, Rodney Landis; ends — Grant Levin, Buzz Rice (honorable mention), Donald Lowe (honorable mention); linemen — Mark Belisle, Jason Sales, Brandon Hamel (honorable mention); punter — Shay Simoneau; kicker — Butch Hamel; defense: linemen — Sales, Belisle, Kyle Bienhoff (honorable mention); Joe Wyrill (honorable mention); Matt Mann (honorable mention); Dylan Gross (honorable mention); linebackers — Panter, Bryce Trumpp, David Keuhn (honorable mention); defensive backs — Rodney Landis, Dustin Bain (honorable mention).

Volleyball

On the all-league volleyball

team were:

First Team — Lindsey Graham, Northern Valley; Kristin Hardy, Northern Valley; Lanee Webb, Logan.

Second Team — Jenny Noel, Logan; Vanessa Van Diest, Logan. Honorable Mention — Kelli Cole.

Others on the team were: first team — Ashley Kraft, Western Plains; Kendra Matteson, Eastern Heights; Jill Weeks, Western Plains; second team — Amy Flax, Western Plains; Bailey Gehring, Palco; Nicole Haskett, Eastern Heights; JoAnn Yoxall, Kensington; honorable mention — Claire Cole, Kensington; Baylee Lehmann, Kensington; Alison Mishler, Western Plains; Melissa Nonamaker, Kensington.

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